

July 15, 1955

CIA at Langley

Statement of [redacted] of McLean, Virginia.

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My name is [redacted] I live between Langley and Great Falls, in Fairfax County, Virginia, and I am here today to speak on behalf of citizens who are opposed to the location of a new headquarters building for the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley.

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Prior Secrecy. - We greatly appreciate the committee's courtesy in letting us appear and testify. It was publicly announced last April 7 that CIA had given up any plan to locate in Langley. The agency has never openly changed that decision. Nevertheless, within the last two weeks it has suddenly become apparent that the Langley site is again being considered. After a closed hearing, with no notice to the residents of the area or others opposed, an authorization was approved which would allow CIA extra funds for a road if it builds in Langley. Our local citizens association invited CIA representatives to speak to us on their reasons for considering the Langley site, but the invitation was turned down.

Objections to locating in Langley. - We believe the publicly available facts demonstrate that there are serious objections to locating CIA in Langley.

Extra Cost. - The Langley site would cost taxpayers an estimated \$13 million more than other sites being considered--\$8.5 million in Federal funds for a highway, \$2.5 million in State funds for road improvements, \$2 million in County funds for utilities.

Residential Area. - Langley is now a unique rural-residential area of one-family houses, country places, and farms. There are no apartment buildings. The only commercial development in 10 miles along the road to Great Falls are two filling stations. The area has virtually no public water or sewerage facilities, the majority of homes being served by wells and septic fields.

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Into such an area it is proposed to place what has been called a "Little Pentagon". The building would be the second largest Government office building in the United States--second only to the Pentagon. It would contain approximately 1,610,000 net square feet of usable office space. The CIA structure would be more than two and one half times as large as the Justice Department building and six times as large as New State. At the reported figure of 100 square feet of office space per employee, the CIA building would have room for over 15,000 employees.

Expected Impact. - The Fairfax County planning staff estimated conservatively that a building for only 8,000 to 10,000 employees would bring with it an additional 23,000 residents, including the necessary service workers; other estimates have been higher. Within a decade, the planning staff said, the population of the Langley area would "nearly double."

Inevitably, that huge population increase would mean commercial construction, mass housing and other drastic changes in a rural-residential section. This is what Paul C. Watt, director of the National Capital Regional Planning Council, found after study: "The impact of such a proposed installation would require . . . a greater area for medium to low density single-family lots, possibly some duplex and multi-family areas and a proportionate increase in commercial and industrial land use. There would be pressure on the planning and governing bodies to probably go beyond what they might feel is reasonable in view of assumed population growth and capital improvement costs. . . . The impact of the proposed agency upon the land use and zoning practices would be dependent to a great extent upon the ability of the local planning agency and the county governing body to maintain reasonable control of land development. Past experience in similar circumstances indicate that this is demanding an almost impossible task of these citizen bodies in view of the normal land speculation that follows."

And this impact will fall on a community already coping with inadequate public facilities. For example:

Roads. - It has been proposed to rush extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the Langley site, and the State of Virginia has agreed to improve a section of the

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road from Chain Bridge. It has been suggested that this will meet the road problem. One might as well say that to build the Shirley Highway from Washington to the Pentagon and stop it there would have been adequate for that installation.

Even with the proposed expenditure of over \$10,000,000 for roads there will be both built-in bottlenecks and dead ends. Chain Bridge, a two-lane crossing with inadequate approaches, will be a major problem for the huge new streams of traffic. Both the parkway and the four-lane road from Chain Bridge will come to a dead-end at Langley. Presumably all traffic generated by the Parkway and all traffic to the installation from Fairfax County are to travel over the existing two-lane road through the village of McLean or the 18-foot wide winding road to Great Falls. Direct access from Maryland would have to await the far-distant date -- not even on a priority schedule -- when Congress considers still another bridge beyond the one now being discussed.

Use of the area's slim allotment of Virginia road funds on one major, otherwise unscheduled project will mean little help for local roads for years. Furthermore, it is now assumed that existing appropriations will cover the right of way costs for the Parkway, but Mr. Watt warned in his report: "In view of the publicity relating to this installation there is serious doubt that the funds now available would be sufficient because of probable speculative raises in land values." And Arlington County has expressed the belief that, with CIA traffic, a six-lane instead of the planned four-lane highway would be needed.

Other Facilities. - Arrangements are said to have been made to supply a CIA building itself with water and sewerage. But this will do nothing to service the large new population. The water table is already falling in the area, and accelerated development will dry up existing wells.

The Langley-McLean area now has only one public school. The Fairfax planning staff estimated that the additional population brought in by CIA would include enough school-age children to fill at least three more schools in the immediate area, and six in the whole county.

In other words, we believe it is not enough to say, as CIA has said, that it will build a dignified building and have some grass and trees around it, so the neighborhood will be undisturbed. Putting a "Little Pentagon" in a rural-residential area will have a major and damaging impact.

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We think the situation was summed up accurately by Mr. Max S. Wehrly, director of the Urban Land Institute and member of the Regional Planning Council, who reported after study:

"The particular site [Langley] proposed for this installation lies in one of the sections of Northern Virginia least able to accomodate it in terms of existing or foreseeable access, utilities and services, or its disruptive effect upon the present character and desirable development of the area."

Potential Park Land. - I would guess that many of you are unaware that Congress, in the Capper-Crampton Act of 1930, authorized the National Capital Planning Commission to take over all or most of the proposed site at Langley for park purposes. (46 Stat. 482) This land is the only substantial piece of U.S. Government property on the Virginia shore above Chain Bridge. It has meadows, forests and a mile and a half of river front overlooking the magnificent Potomac gorge which Congress sought to preserve in establishing the George Washington Memorial Parkway system. Plans for a park are now being actively pressed, independently of this dispute over the CIA building. After the CIA indicated on April 7 that it was ending consideration of Langley, [redacted] a resident of the area and former president of the McLean Citizens' Association, asked the Undersecretary of Commerce to prepare a statement of what part of the Langley tract was needed by the Bureau of Public Roads and what could be made available for a park. [redacted] has been informed that the statement is being drafted. The McLean Citizens' Association has voted, recommending the designation of the bulk of the tract for a park and recreation area. We have requested the National Capital Planning Commission to consider exercising its statutory authority to set the area aside for park purposes, and we understand the matter will be taken up at the Commission's next meeting, in August.

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Local Sentiment. - The McLean Citizens' Association, drawing its members from the entire area, has voted to oppose location of a new CIA building in Langley. Of several sites now being considered by CIA, Langley is the only one in which the local citizens association has objected. Alexandria, for example, has warmly invited CIA to locate on a tract which is already served by all utilities and by a super-highway approaching from both north and south, and a tract which would cost the

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taxpayers less than one twenty-fifth as much as Langley in the non-building costs connected with a CIA headquarters. The Alexandria site exactly fits a formal recommendation by the National Capital Planning Commission on April 8 that, if CIA wishes to locate in Virginia, it choose

"a locality where there is already established a nucleus for an urban environment which an establishment of such size would stimulate and where public facilities and services are already available or can readily be extended, such as in the southern part of Fairfax County, in Springfield, or in the newly annexed portion of Alexandria."

We believe that if any other agency of Government came to Congress and said it had to locate its headquarters on potential park land, in the middle of a residential suburb, against the wishes of the locality and at a cost greatly exceeding that of normal sites for an office building, Congress would quickly end such ideas. We respect CIA and its director, and we recognize the agency's important function in the Cold War. But we do not know any reason why CIA, to perform that function, must violate all the principles of economy and good planning.

I would like to urge the Congress not to appropriate the extra \$8.5 million or more which the Langley site entails.
